



EDUCATION DECENTRALIZATION SUPPORT ACTIVITY (EDSA)

Quarterly Report

February 20 – March 31, 2009

Presented to:

United States Agency for International Development/Malawi
Under Cooperative Agreement No. 674-A-00-09-00010-00

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Education Decentralization Support Activity

Section 1: EDSA Overview

Project Name:	Education Decentralization Support Activity (EDSA)
Reporting Period:	January 1, 2009- March 31, 2009
Obligation funding amount:	\$3,510,000 (for FY 2009)
Project duration:	February 20, 2009- February 28, 2012
Evaluation dates:	February 20, 2009- March 31, 2009
Person responsible for drafting report	Joan Owomoyela and David Balwanz
Project Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Component 1: Strengthened MoEST policy and strategy articulation, interpretation and implementation. • Component 2: Improved decentralization implementation, planning and data utilization for informed decision-making. • Component 3: Enhanced role and participation of communities in monitoring education service delivery.

Overview

The USAID-funded Education Decentralization Support Activity (EDSA) program (2009-2012) provides technical assistance to the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology to *strengthen the decentralization process at the district and school level with clear policies and procedures*. The program works intensively in six districts and divisions to implement the MoEST decentralization policies and systems. Lessons learned from the operationalization of the decentralization tools are fed back to the MoEST for system refinement, scaling up and national replication.

The Education Decentralization Support Activity program supports the goals and activities outlined in the Government of Malawi's Growth and Development Strategy (MDGs) by identifying the factors that promote and negate effective education decentralization at the district and sub-district level. This information is used to refine and promote systems and policies that work to promote education efficiency, most notably the reduction of drop-out and repetition at the primary levels. EDSA also contributes to the NESP goals of:

- a) promoting NESP as the main reference for Government Education sector planning and as key guideline to the roles and responsibilities of all education sector partners at both center and decentralized levels;
- b) identifying/clarifying and strengthening educational management roles;
- c) strengthening monitoring and evaluation throughout the system; and,
- d) assisting primary and secondary directorates, decentralized authorities and communities to ensure effective decentralization and community ownership and participation.

The USAID/EDSA project supports the fulfillment of the MoEST vision through three main components:

- **Component 1:** Strengthened MoEST policy and strategy articulation, interpretation and implementation.
- **Component 2:** Improved decentralization implementation, planning and data utilization for informed decision-making.
- **Component 3:** Enhanced role and participation of communities in monitoring education service delivery.

Section 2: Overall Progress of the EDSA Project for the Quarter

1.1 Associate Cooperative Agreement 674-A-00-09-00010-00 Signed

The EDSA Associate Cooperative Agreement (674-A-00-09-00010-00) was signed February 20, 2009 by USAID and counter-signed by the Academy for Educational Development February 24, 2009. EDSA start-up commenced March 2, 2009 with a kick-off meeting held at AED Washington D.C. headquarters. The EDSA start-up team included —1) David Balwanz, AED Washington EDSA Program Manager; 2) Hansell Boudon, AED Washington Procurement Specialist; 3) Elizabeth Leu, AED Washington Senior Technical Advisor; and 4) Joan Owomoyela, EDSA Chief of Party.

1.2 EDSA Start-up Team Arrival in Malawi

The start up team arrived in Lilongwe March 5, 2009. Mr. Lester Namathaka, Deputy Chief of Party/Senior Capacity Building Advisor¹ joined the initial EDSA implementation team for brief periods of work during the month of March. On March 6, the EDSA team met with the MoEST Director of Planning (Dr. Augustine Komlongera) and USAID to initiate the EDSA work. Discussions focused on the further articulation of the EDSA District Selection Criteria (see Activity 1.4) and the development of EDSA interim Scopes of Work for the provision of technical assistance in the areas of policy, monitoring and evaluation and EMIS (See Annex 2 and Activity 1.5). The EDSA Team formally met with the USAID Mission Director, Deputy Director and Program Officer in mid-March to present the project.

1.3 EDSA Participation in MoEST and Development Partners Meetings

During the week of March 8th, the EDSA team participated in a series of MoEST and Development Partner meetings. This included:

- *Governance and Management Technical Working Group meeting:* EDSA (Balwanz, Namathaka, and Owomoyela) reviewed the 2009-2009 Programme of Work and provided updates to their planned activities
- *Teacher Education Technical Working Group:* EDSA (Leu) participated in the review of the 2008-2009 Programme of work
- *MoEST Joint Sector Review meeting* (Balwanz, Leu, Namathaka, and Owomoyela) participated in the development of the Teacher Education and Basic Education Programmes of Work for 2009-2010.
- *Development Partner meeting:* EDSA presented an overview of the project to development partners working in the field of education.

¹ Lester Namathaka joined the EDSA start-up team the week of March 8th and again the week of March 22nd. Mr. Namathaka officially joined the EDSA project April 1, 2009.

- *District Education Managers Meeting*: EDSA Chief of Party attended the District Education Managers' budget meeting (held March 18) in Liwonde and presented an overview of the EDSA work as well as the EDSA district selection criteria. Suggestions were solicited from the DEMs on how the criteria may be strengthened.
- *Malawi Institute of Education meeting*: Elizabeth Leu met with the Director and Deputy Director of MIE, Senior Curriculum Specialist and Facilitator of Head Teacher Training on 19 March focused primarily on inclusion of the SIP planning and strategies for school/community participation in the head teacher training carried out by MIE.

In addition to these meetings, the EDSA team also held meetings with District Education Managers (Blantyre City, Muzu City and Lilongwe Urban), Zomba District Education Office staff and the MoEST Directorates of Basic Education and Educational Planning as well as the MoEST EMIS Uni. Information gathered from these discussions were used as the basis for the development of the EDSA annual (2009-2010) workplan.

1.4 EDSA Development of District Selection Criteria and Phase I District Selection

The EDSA program description outlined the key criterion points to be considered for the selection of the six EDSA districts where the project will work intensively to operationalize MoEST policies, strategies and guidelines and share lessons learned with the central level. After discussions with various MoEST directorates and the District Education Managers, the following (quantitative and qualitative) criterion was put forward:

- *Education efficiency, economic and social indicators²*: This includes: 1) education efficiency indicators (i) gender parity, (ii) net enrollment rate (iii) pupil-teacher ratio (qualified and unqualified teacher-pupil ratio), (iv) repetition, (v) drop-out and 2) social indicators: (i) poverty (poor persons below poverty line and ultra-poor persons indicators) and literacy (illiteracy) indicators and number of orphan and vulnerable children (OVCs) in a district.
- *Contextual (qualitative) elements* taken into consideration include social, economic, and infrastructure factors and their response to these factors. In addition, districts where limited external interventions have taken place vis-à-vis districts where a significant number of external interventions have taken/are taking place (this also includes examining districts where USAID is providing assistance, such as Dowa District), and the District's response, have also been taken into consideration. Twelve districts (two from each division) were identified for MoEST consideration:
 - Northern Region: Nkhata Bay and Mzimba South Districts
 - Central East Region: Dowa and Nkhotokota Districts
 - Central West Region: Dedza and Mchinji Districts
 - South East Region: Zomba and Mangochi Districts
 - South West Region: Blantyre City and Mwanza Districts
 - Shire Highlands Region: Phalombe and Mulanje Districts

² Education efficiency indicators taken from MoEST EMIS 2008 data; poverty indicators taken from demographic, economic and social data provided by MoEST Basic Education Department.

1.5 Development of Start-up Scopes of Work

In response to the request from the MoEST and USAID that the EDSA Team ‘hit the ground running’, interim Scopes of Work for key technical activities to be undertaken during the first three month period (March-May 2009) were drafted and reviewed with the MoEST for further action. Three key technical areas include: 1) Policy, 2) Monitoring and Evaluation and 3) Education Management Information System (EMIS). The matrix (below) identifies the key activities, deliverables and timeframe for the activities.

Interim Scopes of Work Activities

Activities	Deliverable	Timeframe
<u>Policy Activity:</u> NESP Overarching Framework Document	NESP Overarching Framework Document that outlines the mission, key goals, indicators, objectives, targeted results and policies.	April 2009
<u>Policy Activity:</u> Policy Brief	Policy Briefing Papers contain the following: 1) brief overview of critical issue which is addressed; 2) policy options—pros and cons of each option; 3) suggestions for way forward	April-May 2009
<u>Monitoring and Evaluation Activity:</u> Review of NESP M&E Framework and Strategy ³	Briefing paper discussing alignment of the NESP M&E framework and operationalization to the FTI framework and providing recommendations for strengthening the NESP M&E plan.	April – May 2000
<u>EMIS Activity :</u> Decentralization to 10 remaining districts (Procurement of Equipment and EMIS Training)	Sensitization and training of EMIS staff in 10 remaining districts and 2) installation of EMIS equipment.	April-June 2009
<u>EMIS Activity:</u> EMIS use at the Decentralized levels (Districts and Schools)	Policy briefing paper on EMIS use and EMIS gaps at decentralized levels.	April-July 2009.

1.6 Project Operations Start-Up

During the month of March, the following key operational activities were initiated:

- Project Office identified: A project office has been identified in Area 10 (Area 10/Plot 611). Repairs to the interior and exterior prior to occupation are currently in progress. A move-in date of May 1, 2009 has been targeted.
- NGO registration and work permit papers for COP initiated: EDSA initiated registration with CONGOMA and CoP temporary employment permit.

³ As part of the development of the draft NESP Overarching Framework, 9 quantitative indicators were identified to measure the three NESP goals: 1) equitable access 2) improve quality and relevance and 3) improve governance and management. It was agreed in April with the Director of Planning that the EDSA Performance Monitoring and Research Plan would develop a mixed-method research plan to collect data on the nine (quantitative) NESP indicators and through a qualitative lens, examine the decentralization questions (thematic issues) outlined in the EDSA District Selection Criteria. This plan will serve as the deliverable for the Review of the NESP M&E Framework and Strategy.

- Bank account opened: ESDA opened two accounts with National Bank of Malawi. Both a dollar account and a kwacha account were opened to protect the project from loss as a result of exchange fluctuations.
- Job advertisements posted in local newspapers: ESDA posted six positions in the two largest national newspapers. The first four positions, Finance Manager, Administration and Procurement Manager, Administrative Assistant and Grants Manager were advertised in early March.
- Short listing of first four positions completed: ESDA received 46 for the Finance Manager position, 51 for Administration and Procurement Manager, 131 for Administrative Assistant and 43 for Grants Manager. All applications were reviewed and of those 271 candidates, 20 were short-listed (five/position) for further review.
- Start-up procurements initiated: In order to process technically we had to purchase the following materials: laptop computer, printer/scanner/copier combo, filing cabinets, office supplies, business cards, etc.
- Vendors identified and draft RFQs created for other procurements: Key vendors were identified for future procurements such as car dealers, internet providers, IT providers, security companies, medical insurance companies, furniture companies and office supply stores.
- Lawyer identified to review ESDA benefits and hiring practices to ensure compliance with local labor laws: ESDA contracted a lawyer to provide on-going guidance on registration, taxation, employee benefits, local labor laws, and employee medical insurance. The lawyer and the AED will finalize these points in the next quarter.

Section 3: Challenges, Solutions and Actions Taken

Current and potential challenges, if identified, will be elaborated upon in the next Quarterly Report (due July 30, 2009).

Section 4: Lessons, Best Practices and Recommendations

This section will be elaborated upon in the next Quarterly Report (due July 30, 2009).

Section 5: Success Stories

This section will be elaborated upon in the next Quarterly Report (due July 30, 2009).

Section 5: Management Issues

Since the inception of the EDSA proposal (November 2008) and the subsequent BAFO response (January 2009), the environment at the MoEST has significantly changed. Changes include, among others:

- Distribution of a draft of MoEST National Decentralisation Programme II (2008-2013);
- MoEST Application for FTI funding (due August 2009); and

- Progress of Governance and Management Technical Working Group and other Technical Working Groups and development of Programmes of Work as part of MoEST workplan.
- Results of the Joint Sector Review meeting week of March 6 (Programmes of Work 2009-2010 developed).

At the initial EDSA meeting (March 5, 2009), the Director of Planning requested EDSA's assistance in being a 'sounding board' for the FTI process as well as, potentially, for a variety of other issues. While the EDSA scope of work continues to focus on education decentralization, aspects of the project will also focus on providing technical assistance to the MoEST to move from a project-based approach to a sector-wide program approach.

Thus, EDSA realigned the original long-term advisor configuration to meet the needs of the evolving MoEST SWAp environment. The original long-term advisor configuration was: 1) Decentralization Policy and Planning Advisor, 2) Decentralization Operations and Program Advisor, 3) Senior Capacity Building Advisor, 4) EMIS and M&E Advisors, and 5) Gender, HIV/AIDS and SHN Advisor. The original positions of Decentralization and Planning Advisor and Decentralization Operation and Program Advisor were rolled into one position renamed **Decentralization Planning Advisor (RTI position)**. A new position—**Systems and Policy Advisor (AED position)**—was created to meet the needs of the emerging MoEST SWAp environment and to house the Information/Feedback Loop mechanism. (Responsibilities for the two positions are articulated in the matrix on the following page (7)). The Gender, HIV/AIDS and SHN Advisor was renamed Social Development Advisor (responsibilities remain the same). The realigned long-term technical advisor structure may be found in Annex 3.

Revised EDSA Long-Term Advisors Responsibilities

Position	
Decentralization Planning Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct decentralization implementation support to the district and school level MoEST staff, District Assembly, etc. • Provide regular support to district- level planning, monitoring, and budgeting and quality assurances processes. • Support Capacity Building Advisor in his implementation of SIP processes supporting school level planning, monitoring, etc. • Work in collaboration with EMIS and M&E STTA to support increased dissemination and use of data and analysis at the district and school levels. • Work with capacity building advisor to support development of project training programs and follow-on activities. • Support CoP in policy areas involving financing and the financing component of other policy areas. (This is most likely to be a Year 2 activity), • Provide assistance in the operationalization of NDP II and Devolution Guidelines. • Review planning (e.g., District Development Plan, District Education Plan, School Improvement guidelines, etc.). This is both a central and district level activity. • Assist in developing policy briefs.

Systems and Policy Advisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide direct decentralization implementation support to the district and school level MoEST staff, District Assembly, etc. • Provide regular support to district- level planning, monitoring, and budgeting and quality assurances processes. • Support Capacity Building Advisor in his implementation of SIP processes supporting school level planning, monitoring, etc. • Work in collaboration with EMIS and M&E STTA to support increased dissemination and use of data and analysis at the district and school levels. • Work with capacity building advisor to support development of project training programs and follow-on activities. • Support CoP in policy areas involving financing and the financing component of other policy areas. (This is most likely to be a Year 2 activity), • Provide assistance in the operationalization of NDP II and Devolution Guidelines. • Review planning (e.g., District Development Plan, District Education Plan, School Improvement guidelines, etc.). This is both a central and district level activity. • Assist in developing policy briefs.

Section 6: Update of the Performance Monitoring and Research Plan

The EDSA Performance Monitoring and Research Plan will be submitted to USAID on May 20, 2009. Progress on the development and implementation of the EDSA PMRP will be noted in the next Quarterly Report (due July 30, 2009).

Section 7: Planned Activities for Next Quarter

The EDSA Annual Workplan is due April 20, 2009. A matrix outlining the key activities was initiated. In Annex 1 is an outline of the USAID/Malawi EDSA Quarterly Report format for AOTR review and approval.

Annex 1 DRAFT EDSA Quarterly Report Format

Section 1: EDSA Overview

Section 2: Overall Progress of the EDSA Project for the Quarter, including PMP update and Planned Activities for the Next Quarter

We would like to combine the three above sections into one component to show a coherent set of activities (activities conducted in the quarter and planned for the next quarter) and to show progress against the performance monitoring indicators (PMP update). In addition section will also note Challenges, Solutions and Actions Taken.

Component 1: *Strengthened MoEST policy and strategy articulation, interpretation and implementation.*

- Activity Benchmarks
- Key activities undertaken (Section 1)
- Planned activities not undertaken with a brief explanation (Section 2)
- PMP indicators: note progress (Section 6)

Component 2: *Improved decentralization implementation, planning and data utilization for informed decision-making.*

- Activity Benchmarks
- Key activities undertaken (Section 1)
- Planned activities not undertaken with a brief explanation (Section 2)
- PMP indicators: note progress (Section 6)

Component 3: *Enhanced role and participation of communities in monitoring education service delivery.*

- Activity Benchmarks
- Key activities undertaken (Section 1)
- Planned activities not undertaken with a brief explanation (Section 2)
- PMP indicators: note progress (Section 6)

Section 3: Lessons, Best Practices and Recommendations

Section 4: Success Stories

Section 5: Management Issues

Annex 2 EDSA Interim Scopes of Work

Policy Scope of Work

Activity 1: NESP Overarching Framework Document

- Review National Education Sector Program documents.
- Identify areas of ‘disconnect’ between various documents and propose.
- Suggestions/recommendations for a unified format and terminology.
- Develop NESP overarching framework document.

Deliverable: NESP Overarching Framework Document that outlines the mission, key goals, objectives, sub-objectives, and indicators/targets. (5-7 pages)

Timeframe: April 2009

Activity 2: Policy Briefs

- Review the National Education Sector Policy Statement (NESPS), including inputs from the Salima meeting held the week of March 2, 2009.
- Identify critical policy issues which need to be addressed.
- Develop policy briefing papers on policy options, for example what are the pros and cons of automatic promotion in the lower primary grades to address the issues of repetition. EDSA will work with the MoEST to address the most critical policy issues.

Deliverable: Policy Briefing Papers contain the following: 1) brief overview of critical issue which is addressed; 2) policy options—pros and cons of each option; 3) suggestions for way forward (5-8 pages)

Time frame: April-May 2009

Monitoring and Evaluation Scope of Work

Activity 1: Review of NESP M&E Framework and Strategy

- Review documentation informing the NESP M&E plan, including the NESP, the NESP operational supplement, the Country Survey Report, current documents supporting the FTI application, and TWG Programmes of Work for 2008-09 and plans for 2009-10.
- Consult with the MoEST M&E Department, NESP TWGs and M&E officers in MoEST departments
- Discuss with key MoEST staff the extent to which NESP and FTI M&E will be linked and required to report on planning and expenditure against the Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

Deliverable: Briefing paper discussing alignment of the NESP M&E framework and operationalization to the FTI framework and providing recommendations for strengthening the NESP M&E plan.

Timeframe: April – May 2009

EMIS Scope of Work

Activity 1: EMIS Decentralization to 10 remaining districts (Procurement of Equipment and EMIS Training)

- Rapid assessment of the EMIS relevant technology status (electricity, connectivity, security) of the 10 districts not reached by the previous project with EMIS equipment, sensitivity and training. (Discussions to be held with the MoEST Procurement Unit/Advisors and EMIS Unit on EMIS inventory status at the districts.)
- Sensitization of districts receiving EMIS equipment and training.
- Procure, deliver and install required equipment in 10 districts.
- EMIS training to 10 district staff (to be led by EMIS Unit).
- Evaluation of EMIS capacity building and training needs for the year 1 workplan.

Deliverable: 1) Sensitization and training of EMIS staff in 10 remaining districts and 2) installation of EMIS equipment.

Timeframe: April-June 2009

Activity 2: EMIS use at the Decentralized levels (Districts and Schools)

- Implement a gap analysis of EMIS use at decentralized levels.
- Analysis will be designed to feed inform the extent to which EMIS activities and data can support the MGDS and NESP M&E framework.
- Analysis will include recommendation on possible technical support for EMIS enhancement (data collection, communication and inclusion into district and school planning and decision-making; inclusion of HIV, SHN and PCAR school-quality monitoring indicators).

Deliverable: Policy briefing paper on EMIS use and EMIS gaps at decentralized levels.

Timeframe: April-July 2009.

Annex 3

EDSA Personnel Organogram

